

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Eric Broker, ebroker@mnopera.org or 612-342-1612

Carol Schuler, carol@cschuler.com or 612-281-7030

Project Opera Presents the World Premiere of *Memory Boy*

Minnesota Opera's Premiere Training Program Performs a Post-Apocalyptic Family Opera

MINNEAPOLIS (January 21, 2016) – Project Opera's second commissioned opera, *Memory Boy*, premieres February 5-7, 2016, in a fully staged production performed at The Lab Theater (700 1st St N, Minneapolis) as an extension of the New Works Initiative. This new opera by composer Reinaldo Moya and librettist Mark Campbell is based on the novel by Will Weaver.

Project Opera, a training program for students in grades 4-12, is the centerpiece of Minnesota Opera's expanding education program for young singers. Led by Music Director Dale Kruse, Project Opera fosters a healthy vocal technique, exposes students to repertoire in the major operatic languages and instills the fundamentals of acting technique throughout the year-long program. Founded in 2004, the group performs one opera per year.

Memory Boy is a popular young adult science fiction novel about the aftermath of recurring volcanic eruptions, and a Minnesota family trying to survive. Ash continues to drift around the world two years after the catastrophe and food hoarding and violence are rampant. Sixteen-year-old Miles Newell and his family realize they must leave their suburban Minneapolis home for their cabin in the north if they are to survive. With car travel forbidden, they escape the city via the "Ali Princess," a part-bicycle, part-sailboat contraption built by Miles to carry them to safety in these desperate times.

Pulitzer prize-winning librettist Mark Campbell (*Silent Night*, *The Shining*) was thrilled to create a work for families. "*Memory Boy* is about an American family who learns to survive in difficult times by working as one unit and listening to the advice of someone from an older generation," said Campbell. "Creating new opera for families is important and special. I really believe we need to create more family operas".

Venezuelan-American composer Reinaldo Moya, known for his rhythmically and emotionally-charged works influenced by a multitude of voices and influences, worked to create "a very diverse, fun, exciting and hopefully moving and touching score for this piece." Moya adds that "the opera includes diverse musical styles because we are dealing with a very diverse cast of people. There is a little bit of what you might call musical theater, contemporary music, some minimalism, a bit of jazz because the father is a jazz drummer and there's even baroque music to portray a character's old-fashioned inflexibility and curmudgeonly nature. I couldn't be more excited to see all of these different elements come together."

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Memory Boy is a part of Minnesota Opera's New Works Initiative. A pioneering movement in new opera when it was launched in 2008, Minnesota Opera's New Works Initiative (NWI) was designed to invigorate the operatic art form with an infusion of contemporary works, and formalize the company's commitment to artistic growth, leadership and innovation. *Memory Boy* is the follow up to Project Opera's incredibly successful 2012 commission of *The Giver*.

- What:** Project Opera's world premiere production of *Memory Boy*
- Where:** The Lab Theater, 700 1st St N, Minneapolis, MN 55401
- When:** Friday, February 5, 2016, at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m.
Saturday, February 6, 2016, at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m.
Sunday, February 7, 2016, at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.
- Tickets:** \$15 for adults, \$5 for kids 18 and under. Call the Minnesota Opera Ticket Office at 612-333-6669, Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., or purchase online at mnoopera.org.
- Media:** Press information is available at mnoopera.org/press. Check back for updated resources and information.

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Founded in 1963, Minnesota Opera has paved a bold, illustrious path. As an artistic pioneer, its dedication to excellence and inventive vision make it a steadfast leader in the opera community and beyond. Each year the company reaches nearly 400,000 people through its mainstage productions, groundbreaking education and training programs, community engagement, radio broadcasts and digital content. Heralded for its commitment to develop original works, the company has commissioned and produced more than 40 new operas that have been seen throughout the world. One of the nation's largest and most distinguished opera companies, Minnesota Opera is consistently recognized for its innovation and world-class artistry, delighting audiences young and old for more than 50 years. Together with the Ordway, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and The Schubert Club, Minnesota Opera is a member of the Arts Partnership and performs on the stage of the Ordway. www.mnoopera.org